

## **“Money and Giving, Part 4” - 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 – January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "Money and Giving."
- Chapter nine is a continuation of Paul addressing the Corinthians about their giving to help the impoverished Jerusalem church.
- Actually, Paul had not only written to them about this in the previous chapter, he also addressed it at the end of his first epistle.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 — 1 Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

- The reason I mention this is because the back-story is germane to our understanding of the context that this chapter is written.
- Absent this understanding there's the potential for misunderstanding what some suggest is sanctified sarcasm on Paul's part.
- This because, the Corinthian Christians had not followed through on a financial commitment they had made one year earlier.
- It's for this reason that Paul has to write them yet again, in order to remind them of that which they had promised they would do.
- What I find interesting is it's not so much that Paul does this, as the way Paul does this, such that, he focuses on the blessing.
- As such, what we're about to see here in this chapter is that our giving blesses the Lord, the Lord's people, and it blesses us.

### **1. It ministers to the Lord's people (Verses 1-5)**

- v1-2 Paul says that he shouldn't have to write them about ministering to the Lord's people but their enthusiasm stirred up others.
- v3-4 He tells them he's sending brothers in order that his boasting would prove true, and that they would be ashamed if it didn't.
- v5 He says he's doing this so the gift that they had promised would be ready as a generous one and not one grudgingly given.

- What Paul is saying is the Corinthians willingness and eagerness to give had both blessed and stirred up others to give as well.
- There's an important principle here and sadly, it's one for which we as Christians often times either dismiss or even totally miss.
- Namely, that our example having a profound and powerful influence on other people, whether it's a bad example or a good one.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,

- It's interesting to note that Paul tells them to have the financial gift ready as a generous one and not as one grudgingly given.
- The reason this is interesting is because by having it prepared in advance Paul would not have to then pressure them to give.
- To me, this reflects the heart of God, the ultimate giver, Who should always be seen as the perfect example of generous giving.

Alan Redpath of this wrote, "When God gives grace, He does not reluctantly open a little finger and maintain a clenched fist full of gifts. I would tell you today that God's hands are nail-pierced hands and they are wide open. This fountain of grace is always pouring itself out with no limitation on heaven's side at all."

### **2. It brings an abundant blessing to us (Verses 6-10)**

- v6-7 Paul uses the analogy of sowing sparingly or generously and reaping accordingly, saying that God loves a cheerful giver.
- v8-9 He says that God is able and will always bless us abundantly then quotes Psalm 112:9 about scattering gifts to the poor.
- v10 He continues the analogy of a farmer sowing seed saying that God will increase and enlarge the harvest of righteousness.

- There are a couple of things I want to point out, the first of which is the word that's used here for God loving a cheerful giver.
- In the original language of the Greek New Testament, cheerful is hilaros, and it's where we get our English word for hilarious.
- In other words, God loves it when we give out of a cheerful and joyful heart that's happy to give to the one who Himself gave all.

**Morgan - "It must be hilarious giving, giving out of the heart, because you love to give, not because you are bound to give."**

- This ties into the second thought, which has to do with Paul's analogy of a farmer who sows his seed sparingly or generously.
- Specifically the farmer who grudgingly sows his seed sparingly, may have more seed initially, but less of a harvest eventually.
- Conversely, the farmer who sows generously may have less seed initially, but he will enjoy an abundant harvest eventually.

### **3. It brings thanksgiving to God (Verses 11-15)**

- v11 Paul says they'll be enriched in every way so they can be generous on every occasion, which brings thanksgiving to God.
- v12-13 He says they're not only supplying the needs of God's people, but also bringing thanksgiving and praise to God as well.
- v14-15 He says prayers go out to them because of surpassing grace God gave them then, thanks God for His indescribable gift.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the best reasons as to why we should give generously, it would have to be this.
- The reason is that those on the receiving end of our giving will in turn praise and thank God for those who gave so generously.
- Not only will they praise God because of the giver, they will also pray to God for the giver, which is often the natural response.

- In closing, I'd like to point out something that can easily be missed in verse 15 where Paul says Jesus is the indescribable gift.
- The reason I want to point this out is because Paul was never one who was unable to describe anything and articulate everything.
- Yet, when it comes to the gift of salvation, the Apostle Paul finds it virtually impossible to adequately describe what Jesus did.

Adam Clarke says it this way, "JESUS CHRIST, the gift of God's love to mankind, is an unspeakable blessing; no man can conceive, much less declare, how great this gift is; for these things the angels desire to look into. Therefore he may be well called the unspeakable gift, as he is the highest God ever gave or can give to man."